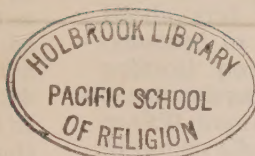




The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● DECEMBER 1978



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MRS. D. L. GOPAL RATNAM,
Hony. Business Manager.

INDIA SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION WORLD SUNDAY SCHOOL DAY 1978

on Sunday, November 5

The booklet: *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven* is for use by all Sunday Schools in India. It was prepared by Doris Franklin; Co-Editor of Christian Education Magazine, Delhi. The theme of the booklet is exciting. It points to a new era for the younger generation all over the world. The United Nations Organization calls upon us to prepare for the new and inspiring vision of a World in which the young people will have their well deserved place as builders of the future.

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To Set at Liberty the Oppressed



People in Madras witnessed a unique procession on Sunday, the twenty-sixth of November, 1978. In response to the call of the Churches to observe that day as Liberation Sunday, thousands of Christians of different denominations drawn from city and rural congregations marched in an orderly and disciplined procession under the leadership of the Rt. Rev. Sundar Clarke, Bishop in Madras, from St. George's Cathedral to the Raj Bhavan in an endeavour to draw the attention of the general public as well as of the State and Central Governments to the unjust and discriminatory treatment meted out to the Christians of Scheduled Castes origin. The procession was unique in the sense that there was no shouting of slogans or running down of personalities or parties or other religious groups. The message the processionists wanted to convey was communicated silently but very eloquently and effectively through placards and banners on which were written: 'The Church Fights for Social Justice', 'The Church Stands with the Oppressed'; 'We Demand Justice for Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin'; 'End Religious Discrimination' etc.

The procession marked a significant break from the traditional indifference and apathy of the Church to the life and problems of its social environment. It was heartening to see the Church emerging out of its shell of pietism and ritualism to participate in the afflictions of its world. There was an indication that the Church was moving closer to the poor and the oppressed. In short, the procession was a laudable effort to contextualize the meaning of incarnation and the message of Christmas that in the fullness of time God sent His only begotten son to take our nature upon him and to be born of a pure virgin so that we may be liberated from all sorts of oppression and be made the children of God.

Indian Christians of scheduled castes origin are victims of grave injustice and discrimination. Their lot is in no way better, if not worse, than their fellow scheduled caste people of the Hindu and Sikh folds. The fact that Indian Christians have embraced a religion other than Hinduism or Sikhism has not made even an iota of difference in their social, economic and cultural condition. Caste and its darling Child, untouchability, are so sanctified by religion, solidified by custom and buttressed by tradition that religious conversion has not been able to make any dent with them. Even after their conversion to Christianity they are treated as untouchables with the attendant social indignities and deprivations. Economically speaking they are the poorest of the poor, earning their livelihood through

professions considered to be the meanest and the lowest in social value and even defiling. Thus Indian Christians of scheduled castes origin like their fellow Harijans, groaning under the burden of the social evils of caste and untouchability and sweating day and night for a morsel of food and living amidst festering cesspools and dunghills and steeped in illiteracy and ignorance, are ground to a sub-human level of existence. They have been crying in agony for liberation from these dark and sinister forces of enslavement and dehumanization. They have been asking for the same special compensatory concessions and privileges as those enjoyed by the Harijans belonging to the Hindu and Sikh religions. But so far their cry has remained to be a cry in the wilderness for want of political power and backing. In the name of the constitutional order issued by the President of India in 1950 these special concessions and privileges are denied to Indian Christians of scheduled castes origin simply because they do not profess Hinduism. It is therefore nothing but discrimination based on religion which is repugnant and harmful to the spirit and institutions of our Secular Democratic Republic. The Church has done well in coming forward to empower the powerless, to provide voice for the voiceless and to stand with them in their struggle for social justice. It is to be ardently hoped that the Government will respond positively to the cry for liberation and social justice raised by the Church on behalf of the poor and the oppressed Indian Christians of scheduled castes origin and amend the Presidential Order of 1950, in order to extend to them all those special privileges and concessions being enjoyed by the Harijans of Hindu and Sikh religions.

The Church's demand for justice to Indian Christians of scheduled castes origin will become more meaningful and effective if the searchlight is turned inwards to see the injustice and discrimination prevalent within the church and efforts are made to abolish them. The Church's struggle for social justice must first start within the Church itself. Then only the Church would have earned the right to demand justice from Government. Further, the Church should not stop restrict its concern and struggle for justice to Indian Christians of scheduled castes origin only. It should proclaim the good news of liberation to all the oppressed irrespective of caste, creed, community and sex. It should be involved in all movements fighting to set at liberty the oppressed. It should provide inspiration, encouragement and support to all those who are struggling to be free and human and become the children of God, which is in essence the message of Christmas.

Christmas 1978

Lord, the feeling I get about your world
is that it has been hijacked
by a new, technological breed
of computerized, mental robots
ticking over with high intelligence
but lacking the healing touch,
the redeeming light of divine wisdom.
And we who are held to ransom
send up our fearful prayers
as we head into the dark unknown
expecting the crash landing of future shock.
The T. V. antennae of our minds
receive horrifying pictures
of the refined brutalities
of a high-powered civilization
spreading its homicidal fury
in waves of meaningless violence
over the once fair face of the Earth,
now pitted with the pock marks
of ugly environmental exploitation
and the haze of pollution for a gas mask
instead of the shimmering veils of Nature's beauty.
Our over-strained, exhausted emotions
float like poor trapped birds
in the oil slick of economic greed,
racial hatred, communal feuds, dirty politics
and the arms racket.
The dove of peace returns twigless
to the rocking ark of humanity
after hovering over perilous seas
full of nuclear-driven submarines
deadlier than killer whales and sharks.
But in spite of our tragic dehumanization
we must still long for the lost innocence
of the infancy of mankind
for we have declared 1979
the International Year of the Child !
Lord, you were born into this world,
the Child of cosmic and human travail.
Be born again—and soon, O Lord,
for the cockpit of your orbiting planet
still needs the Pilot whose strong hands
can control Man's uncharted flight
to his God-given destination.

—CHANDRAN D. S. DEVANESEN

The Mystery of Christmas

Lord, it is time for Christmas !
Christmas is the mystery of Loss and Gain
Mystery Lord ! Truly Mystery !
How can it be that you came for me
How can it be that you made the blind to see
How can it be that you died for me
How can it be that you rose to be

Mystery Lord ! Truly Mystery,
To see you in Time and History
To feel you in Loneliness and Hunger
To understand you in Cyclones and Floods
To know you are with the Roofless and Helpless
To love you Naked and Empty stomached
To realize you in Blindness and Ignorance

Mystery Lord ! Truly Mystery!
India the land of people, religious and languages
Masses appearing and less disappearing
In the Pangs of Separation and Agony
With empty stomachs and Roofless homes
We wonder at another year of floods and cyclones
Fields ravaged, bunds broken, loved ones gone

Mystery Lord ! Truly Mystery,
We ask for eyes to see you, for ears to hear you
For minds to know you—for hearts to love you
Break in Incarnate Lord—break the mystery
To see you in Bethlehem, Calvary and the Empty Tomb
Your ways are unknown but your love is known

Mystery Lord ! Truly Mystery,
I love you Baby Jesus though
I have not understood you fully
Come again into my life and unfold
Yourself to me this Christmas.

SUNDAR CLARKE,
Bishop in Madras.

Christmas Among the New Christians

I write this brief article with the information given to me by our *Sevaks* who serve the Lord and the people in our several mission stations. The responses to and understanding of Christmas among the first generation Christians might interest the reader.

Christmas is a wonder

The ordinary folk in some of the remote regions of our country consider it nothing short of a great wonder when they hear that a Saviour was born in a humble home, and that shepherds were the first to pay their respects to the divine child. In some other regions none has heard about this child. Most of the people in Sitamadi—literally, the birth place of Sita—including the educated, consider the name Jesus as nothing but an archaic or obsolete Sanskrit term. There are others who are so ignorant of the Christian sacramental life that they mistake a baptism service for a wedding ceremony!

Christmas means joy

In many places, where people have heard about the humble birth of Jesus Christ, Christmas is considered a *bada din* (a great day). The entire community of a village in U. P., Christians and non-Christians, organize special dances and take out a procession with a statue of Jesus Christ mounted in a wooden car. Some look upon Christ as the Saviour of the poor.

Christmas unshackles superstition and fear

There are places where, till recently, people were slaves of superstitions of all kinds, magic and sorcery. Even children were given intoxicating drinks in the hope of

strengthening them to withstand the tyranny of the evil spirit! In some of these regions in South Gujarat the liberating power of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, has been greatly acknowledged. The erstwhile animists and spirit worshippers have since turned to Him. Over 500 people have become members of the Church in recent years in these regions. Christmas means to these people the onset of a liberating power sent by God.

Christmas brings a new sense of sacrifice

There are places in our country where Christians are looked down upon and they are dispossessed of their patrimony. A convert in Punjab had to lose all his property and social status when he was deemed an outcaste by the rest of his family on his conversion to Christianity. There are many who consider the loss of social prestige as nothing compared to the joy of Christmas, to the birth of the Lord of sacrifice. At the mission station at Marandahalli in Dharmapuri district in Tamil Nadu one of the prominent leaders of the *Meivazhi Salai* has given up the glory of leadership within a pagan community in order to come into the joy of Christmas.

Is it not interesting to note that such first hand joy of Christmas, which is prevalent among the new Christians of our land, as noted above, is far more meaningful than the stale dazzle and glamour of many a Christian home which passes for the joy of Christmas?

KINGSLEY ARUNOTHAYAKUMAR

Reformation Sunday, A Dialogue Sermon

(Ministry according to the Protestant Reformers)

Text : Matthew 20 : 20-28

October 29, 1978

(Readers, especially those who are inspired to make God's word come alive in new channels, might want to take the Dialogue Sermon seriously. The participants in the following dialogue have effectively verbalized some meaningful insights into the Reformation).

Wilson : Protestant reformers like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Bucer, Cranmer—to make it short—were deeply religious and committed people. We all agree to this. But their stand on certain religious issues resulted in division within the church in the 16th century. We stand in that tradition but now the trend is for unity. Given this situation, how can we understand and celebrate the Reformation Day today ?

Peery : To understand the Reformation revolt we have to see the situation historically. None of these people were interested in starting any new Christian sect but were interested in raising issues with the leaders and theologians of the church, discussing what they saw as problems in the life and teaching of the church.

W : I think you are right. As far as we know when Luther nailed his 95 theses or to put in contemporary language—95 suggestions and questions, his whole motive was to raise issues with the church hierarchy. He wanted a discussion to follow on the questions he raised. And I understand that he wrote them in Latin ; a language of learned theologians of his day.

P : That is right. His theses were in Latin and were questions to the church hierarchy. For example, let me read three of them.

27. There is no divine authority for preaching that the soul flies out of purgatory as soon as the money clinks in the bottom of the chest.

43. Christians should be taught that one who gives to the poor, or lends to the needy, does a better action than if he purchases indulgences ;

63. The true treasury of the church is the Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.

But you must note that this document has been translated into German and printed and published by common people immediately. I am sure Luther himself must have been surprised by this.

W : That means people were waiting for some such challenging documents and Luther was in fact drawn into the struggle which was already in formation.

P : That is right. Luther was drawn into the struggle. But one thing we must keep in mind is that what Luther and other Reformers envisaged was a church calling a council and solving the problems through mutual discussion.

W : I think this is a good observation. I often wonder if the conciliar movement would have succeeded in the 15th century the reformation movement would not have occurred or might have taken different shape.

P : What is this conciliar movement you are talking about ?

W : This was a movement within the Roman Church which claimed that the matters relating to the church should be settled in councils like the great ecumenical councils of the early church times and the final authority in the church lies with the councils rather than with the Roman Pope. Theologians especially those teaching in the university of Paris made the cardinals to call the council and tried to implement this idea especially during the papal schism of 14th and 15th centuries. But the Pope defeated this movement.

P : Weren't councils called during the Reformation struggle ?

W : The councils called during the early part of reformation were called to condemn reformers rather than to discuss matters with them.

P : This is correct. A council with open minded church leaders would have changed the situation drastically. I was really thrilled to read when Hans Küng the Roman Catholic theologian teaching at Tübingen wrote a few years back that the Vatican II Council is four hundred years too late.

W : Even Pope John XXIII said that Roman Church must take some blame for the break up of Christendom. This is a good gesture on the part of

the Roman Church and also an encouragement for us to study our tradition but study it critically.

P: Now coming back to the Reformation, what were the main issues involved in this struggle?

W: That is a very important question. The reformers like Luther, Calvin were not fighting primarily against the decline in the moral standard of the clergy, church hierarchy and the people, but their focus was on the theological teachings of the church of their time.

P: That is right. Reformers of course felt that immorality should be avoided. But according to them the greatest harm was done to Christendom of their time through false teachings of the Church.

W: What do you mean by false teaching?

P: To put it simply, the wrong interpretation of the scriptures. Many times this wrong interpretation was done deliberately for selfish reasons of church hierarchy, for example, teaching about indulgences. The reformers wanted to fight against it and liberate people from it.

W: That is right. In his reply to Cardinal Sadolet, John Calvin writes as follows about reformation: 'When Genevans, instructed by our preaching, escaped from the gulf of error in which they were immersed and be took themselves to a purer teaching of the gospel, you call it defection from the truth of God; when they threw off the tyranny of the Roman pontiff, in order that they might establish among themselves a better form of church, you call it desertion from the church. Come, then, and let us discuss both points in turn.'

In the same treatise Calvin wrote, 'Thou, O Lord, knowest, and the fact has testified itself to men, that the only thing I asked was that all controversies should be decided by thy word: that thus both parties might unite with one mind to establish thy kingdom.'

P: One can say the same about Luther. His main worry was not life of the priests and church hierarchy. That will ruin their lives but he was upset because they kept God's message away from people. Luther said that 'Others, who have lived before me, have attacked the Pope's evil and scandalous life; but I have attacked his doctrine.'

W: How did Luther attack the Pope's doctrine?

P: Luther attacked Pope and his doctrine through preaching the Word and leading people to correct understanding of the Gospel. His cry was that the Word of God should have a free course among people. This is what he said about his reforming work:

'I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdort, the Word, so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing;

the Word did everything. . . I did nothing; I let the Word do its work.'

What one sees here is Luther's great faith in the power of God's Word, and of course Luther's humility in regard to his own part in the matter.

W: If the reformers adopted such a peaceful method, why were the reformers not able to continue to be a part of the Roman Church?

P: Was it not because they were thrown out of the Roman Church?

W: Is that the only reason for the divisions in the church? Did the reformers not feel that they were the true church even though they were cut away from the Roman Church?

P: That is an interesting question. Have you come across an interesting statement made by Karl Barth on this question? He said that when the Reformers were thrown out, the church itself was thrown out with them.

W: That is a very good way of defending Protestantism. But one has to accept that the Reformers had quite a different understanding of the Christian community which they continued to call church.

P: Don't you think that they also had a different understanding of the ministry in that community?

W: That is right. It is Luther who upheld the biblical understanding of the priesthood of all believers in place of mediatorial priesthood.

P: What is this mediatorial priesthood?

W: This is the belief that priests are mediators between God and people, and the Roman mass is the saving sacrifice offered by the priest. And the people had the idea that grace was a kind of spiritual medicine the priest dispensed, and not necessarily the personal relationship which the New Testament teaches.

P: Well, what was it that was new in the teaching of Luther and the other Reformers about the ministry?

W: Luther and the Reformers pointed out that apostles were sent out as preachers and when they established churches they appointed preachers and ministers to the congregations but they did not appoint priests.

P: I still have difficulty in understanding what you are saying.

W: All right, let me expand it. Luther and the reformers taught on the basis of the Bible that there are not two separate orders of people in the church, clergy and laity. For Reformers all the believers are priests.

P: How is that possible? Is it not only those who are ordained who are priests?

W: Not according to Luther. He believed that it is the baptism and not ordination which makes people priests.

P: That means there is no difference between the clergy and laity.

W: There is a difference between clergy and non-clergy, as there is a difference between people of different professions and nothing more. Ministry is one of the offices or vocations God has given to a person in life, like the offices of father, mother, scholar and farmer.

P: That is why that some church historians say that perhaps the principle of the priesthood of all believers was more responsible for dividing Christendom than is generally considered.

W: That's interesting. I remember the director of faith and order commission, Dr. Vischer telling us that on the question of baptism, Lord's Supper and ministry with which the Commission has to deal, ministry is the most difficult question for people to agree on.

P: I think the Reformers understanding that the minister is not a mediator between God and people but only the servant of the Word might help our situation even today. This will I think open the way for accepting ministers of different churches and also accepting women for the work of full ministry.

W: In relation to the ministry, apostolic succession was another problem that Luther and the Reformers had to face.

P: Yes, Luther understood one who teaches, and abides by the apostolic teaching is in apostolic succession and not just one who received ordination from the bishop who in turn received ordination from other bishops going all the way back to the apostles.

W: Even today people will have difficulties in accepting this interpretation. Any way, all these issues we are talking about have a bearing on the Reformers' understanding of the church, are they not?

P: Definitely so. According to them church is a community of believers and not a community of subordinate lay people and hierarchical clergy.

W: But don't you think that in the Reformers' theology there was a place though, for pastors, ministers, bishops and overseas?

P: Definitely so. Otherwise what are we doing here? But they saw all of these offices in terms of service, and not as offices which were somehow spiritually superior to other offices in life.

W: Can we not then take a risk, and say that the Reformers would have said that the grace which the clergy receive from God is not superior to that which teachers, rulers, farmers and labourers receive to carry out their specific work?

P: I fully agree with you.

W: But given all this, our insight into the Reformers' understanding of church, and ministry, what can we learn from them?

P: One thing is to realize how much we owe to them even today.

W: What will be a few examples of this?

P: The whole understanding of God's grace is free and that it is ours if we trust in Him or the doctrine of justification by faith. The Lord's Supper is a 'communion'—the word first used by Luther—between God and people, and people and people. The scripture is the Word of God insofar as it teaches Christ and leads to Christ, all these and many more we owe to the Reformers.

W: But the Reformers did have weak points also don't you agree?

P: Sure. As far as their movement brought division; at least in the present ecumenical age we see it as a tragedy. Secondly with all their cry for individual rights to understand the scripture the Reformers took part in persecuting the Anabaptists and others who did not agree with them. The denial of the same rights, for which they fought, to others is indeed undependable.

W: That means today our task is not to try to adopt and defend everything the reformers did and taught but to have their spirit and to reform the church as the need arises in our time.

P: That is right. Reformers too said that the church should be an ever reforming church, including the Protestant churches.

W: That means we should be open for self-criticism and willing to give up something, even if we have cherished it for a long time if it stands in the way of proclamation of the gospel.

P: This is exactly right that our outlook dare not be only to the past, feeling proud of our heritage as churches which came out of reformation but our outlook should be constantly to the present and the future with a willingness to submit ourselves and our institutions to the new insights to which we are led by the Spirit.

H. S. WILSON

W. P. PEERY

United Theological College

October 31, 1978

For some of the ideas expressed in this sermon, the preachers are indebted to James Atkinson, *Rome and Reformation: A Stubborn problem re-examined*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966.

International Year of the Child 1979

On the report of the W.C.C.—Part II

The Child in the Church—Some Theological and Practical Issues

The Church as a community cannot ignore the cry from the world's children for special recognition. The task of the church is two-fold: ministry, i.e. child nurture in the faith, etc. and advocacy, i.e. political, international and legal, etc. Since this two-fold task cannot be separated the church is concerned with the welfare of all children of every class, colour, culture and religion.

Though the church has exhibited deep concern in the child, there is now a general awareness of failure to adapt to the rapid changes of the last years and to face the 'world emergency for children'. The reason for this is to be found in our usual theological thinking, related mainly to adult models. In Christian tradition adults assume that belonging to the Church is a matter of believing certain things and doing certain things. Since most of the things which we believe in, can be done only by adults, the conduct of the Church does not provide suitable theological framework for interpreting the place of a child in the church. Childhood requires a theology of its own and the task of theology of childhood is to express a distinctively Christian understanding of the nature and status of childhood. At the present moment the adults in the Church are often in the position of the disciples in Mark 10, preventing the children from going to Jesus.

A. Biblical Aspects

(a) In Biblical understanding, the human being of any age is to be as related to the forefathers and to the descendants. Childhood is then an essential component of human life.

'The children of Abraham learn to journey as they wander with faithful Abraham. Abraham tells them where he has been. That is their common past. But now they travel together. That is their future. Together the generations offer each other a mutual nurture'.

The adult and child share together new experiences which are interpreted in the light of tradition. In the Biblical understanding of the covenant the children are included in the people of promise.

'When your son asks you in time to come, "What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord our God has commanded you?" Then you shall say to your son, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand"' (Deut. 6: 20ff)

(b) Jesus had a struggle with a special Jewish tradition and also with his disciples regarding the importance of the children only as a Israel to be. In their understanding, children were too little, too unimportant to belong to the Kingdom of God. Therefore they must be prevented from coming to Jesus. But Jesus declared that the children are immediate to the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of God is immediate to them (Mark 10: 15). He set a child in the midst of his disciples (Mark 10: 16). Jesus declared, 'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me' (Mark 9: 33-37). In serving the weak child, one

encounters the hidden Christ. Jesus identified the child with his own person and with the Kingdom of God.

To receive the Kingdom like a child does not mean that the child possesses any subjective qualities, such as certain feelings or child like institutions, and that an adult has to accept them as his own. The child becomes an example or pattern for the faith of all believers because it is weak and helpless and, at the same time, full of confidence and hope. Children say 'Abba', naturally, and adults must learn to say it, or better, utter the intimate 'Abba' of the Gethsemane prayer.

(c) From the church a light is thrown on Paul's saying that the believers in Christ 'are children of God, and if children, the heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ' (Romans 8: 17). A person becomes a child or he is adopted as a child by baptism, which is understood as an incorporation in Christ, and participation in his death and resurrection. Such incorporation leads at the same time to membership in the family of God. That is a natural family in devaluation. The mother of Jesus had to learn this when Jesus told her in Mark 3: 35, 'Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister and mother'. In the New Testament letters you will find that it is the natural family in which the child relationship to God is to grow (Eph. 6: 1-4). In the early Church homes, once the head of the house becomes a Christian the whole household, including children, would have been adapted.

B. Some First Consequences

(a) *Theological*. If children are to be numbered among the people of God, if they are patterns for the faith of all believers, and if Jesus identified himself with them, we have to answer the following questions:

1. What do we as Christians believe about childhood?
2. What significance does the Christian faith attach to children?

When we reflect about children in the church our anxiety is always to know what to do with them. Theological reflections on childhood may answer the questions if a believer at least has some features of childlikeness.

(b) *Anthropological*. The World Council of Churches had made Humanum Studies beginning with traditional Christian anthropology leading to theological consideration of how human beings are actually seeking their identity, liberation and fulfilment today, both as individuals and as societies. Christian faith and anthropology has to deal with the persons in their movement through life including childhood and old age. A holistic understanding of the human existence is very necessary.

(c) *Ecclesiological*. In recent years experiments are carried out relating to the nurture and education of children in the Church's community life. Attempts are being made to bring the families, children and parents together and to celebrate festivals, worship events and

the Eucharist. Churches have to learn from one another and from the Orthodox Churches and especially from those that give children full rights in the celebration of the Eucharist and which take the worshipping community as an essential place for children. But in many churches, worship, sacramental life and decision-making is only for adults, whereas a child goes to Sunday School, confirmation class or religious instruction.

Instead of thinking 'school' or 'instruction', we need to center our educational concerns on the church's rites and rituals, formal and informal experiences people have in the community and the individual and social actions in the community. This aspect puts nurture of the children and Christian education in the context of a community of living, learning, celebrating and caring people.

(d) *In Ethical-Diaconical Perspective.* Children have their own integrity and dignity. As the recipients of God's unqualified love, each child should have equal access to the provisions for intimate nurture, health, care, learning and guidance, economic sustenance above the survival level and the opportunity for participation in religious life and culture.

This raises a question whether the traditional Christian concept of diaconical care can be regarded as sufficient. The widely accepted task of Christian diakonia caring for destitute children, the orphans, physically and mentally retarded children, etc. centres around building and maintenance, with little attention to the developmental needs of children themselves. Development strategies must aim at 'Planning for Children'. Perhaps the most crucial decision any country has to take is, the decision regarding the allocation of resources between its present generation of producers and the future as represented by its children. If sufficient care is given to each individual child with better preparation for life, the higher the chances are there to bridge the vicious circle of poverty and economic stagnation. The Churches and Christians should assume more responsibility in discussing and implementing the 'Rights of the Child' contained in the 1959 UN Declaration.

(e) *Pedagogical.* In establishing 'Pedagogy of the Child', there is a danger in the understanding of education in families, schools and societies where the aspect of partnership is suppressed in making the child an object of education and of schooling.

Every child needs to have the open possibility to realise her or his full human potential. The capacities of children need to be identified and conveyed and the weaknesses understood and overcome. But in any situation in the world such possibilities are severely limited by racial, ethnic, economic and political prejudices. Every child should have the right of access to its own language, culture and tradition where individuality grows. When children are denied these things, they develop personal feelings of inferiority which destroys the individual and collective initiative.

C. The W. C. C. places before the member Churches two simple but decisive questions:

- (1) What kind of life will our children have?
Or, will they have life at all?
- (2) What kind of faith will our children have?
Or, will they have faith at all?

(To be concluded)

Edited by: MRS. D. L. GOPAL RATNAM,
Hon. General Secretary, CSI.

A Message to the Churches from the Executive Committee of the Council for World Mission

The Executive Committee of CWM has been meeting in Swansea, conscious of the supporting prayers of many people in the twenty-seven member churches.

The Committee sends greetings to all the members.

We feel impelled to ask,

What are these churches? Are they servants in the hands of God or tools of political powers? Do they form bridges over the human divisions or themselves form new divisions in the world? Are they witnesses to joy at the Lord's feast or havens of nostalgia?

None of us can answer these questions with great confidence. We have shared with each other signs of hope but also signs of weakness and fearfulness among the churches we represent. Yet we believe God still calls us all, as Jesus called the disciples, 'Follow me'. If we are to hear that call and know the way he leads, then we have to go through the hard process of repentance.

We have all too easily allowed the lords of the world to take the place of Jesus Christ. For some of us this points to political powers or cultural movements. For others the false lord is security, affluence, and personal status. For others it may be a local church or denomination.

Jesus Christ is Lord. He, who gives us life, calls us to live with him. He judges our hearts. He renews us in his grace. He preserves us from despair of ourselves and our world. He alone makes our churches instruments of mission, and our structures and plans are worth little unless we constantly listen to his word. Mission for us is both local, national and world wide, but it all begins when we meet our Lord.

Lord Jesus, liberate us from our prisons and chains—
concern for ourselves, our position, our reputation;
our obedience to fashion and our tribal gods;
our little view of your salvation.

Help us to see the way of true service, and to follow it with you.

(Courtesy: CWM Newshare)

N.B. :— The Church of South India is a member of the Council for World Mission.

World Council of Churches

Meetings of Unit III

Stony Point, New York (EPS)—The World Council of Churches' Programme Unit on Education and Renewal, meeting for the second time since the 5th Assembly in Nairobi (1975), concluded in full-scale discussions here with a renewed commitment on the part of all working group members to make known the aims and objects of the four sub-unit groupings in the total work of the WCC, and to reiterate the 5th Assembly charge that the unit 'assist churches, through processes of education and renewal, to participate in the changes that Christian faith demands; in the renewal of the whole church; in the transformation of society, and in the strengthening of the ecumenical movement'.

The sub-units in the Unit III are: Renewal and Congregational Life; Education; Women in Church and Society, and Youth.

More than 130 participants from 21 countries on all six continents were the guests of the United Presbyterian Church at their conference centre in Stony Point, 40 miles from New York city, from 28 August to 5 September. The delegates were welcomed to the country and the meeting by Dr. Oscar McCloud, a member of the WCC Executive Committee and director of the United Presbyterian Church Programme Agency in addition to being vice-moderator of the sub-unit on Renewal and Congregational Life.

The meeting was held in the USA with the aim of deepening contacts between the staff and working group members and local church congregations and groups.

Discussions were preceded by 'forty-eight hours of living with the Bible' led by Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber, the WCC Director of Biblical Studies. Content was chosen from the parables of Jesus, from Jeremiah and from Ephesians.

One feature of the programme was a presentation on the 'American Scene'. Three panelists presented the major problems facing US Churches today. These include their corporate style of operation, the gap between methods and style of biblical interpretation and issues of sexuality such as abortion and homosexuality.

These problems were pin-pointed by Arthur J. Moore Jr. editor of the United Methodist Church's mission

magazine *New World Outlook*, Mr. Moore also highlighted another problem which, he said, results from the questioning of 'social assumptions we've always made concerning the benevolence of institutions, society and government'.

'Most people in the mainline denominations always assumed we have an activist stance—if something is wrong we start a programme or ask government to do something about it. We are going to have to examine our whole style', he concluded.

The other panelists in the presentation were Claire Randall, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, USA and Dorothy Height, a United Methodist who heads the National Council of Negro Women and is vice-president of the NCC.

Dr. Cynthia Wedel of Washington, D.C. a WCC president gave the keynote address on 'New Horizons in the Ecumenical Movement'. She challenged the churches to 'dream new dreams' to take account of the past and the 'great changes that have taken place in the last thirty years'. She warned that the world is 'almost totally inter-dependent' and that 'none of us is secure so long as any of us are oppressed or starving'. She underlined the importance of women and youth in the ecumenical movement and advocated that additional efforts in the goals of these programmes be reinforced.

Among projected meetings for the next two years are a first-time consultation with charismatic groups and a number of regional youth meetings leading up to a world assembly of youth in 1981. Other projects include a consultation on human relationships and sexual identity and a symposium on the theological anthropology of the child.

Despite present financial stringencies, the final report of the meeting asserts: 'Unit III finds itself in a stronger position to respond' to the mandate of the 5th Assembly 'than it has been for some time'.

Final reports of the Stony Point discussion with their specific recommendations are to be given to the WCC review committee which meets this month. The meeting was chaired by Principal Olle Engstrom of Sweden, Moderator of Unit III.

By Courtesy : *Ecumenical Press Service.*

NOTICE

'The Church in India is invited to remember the work of the Leprosy Mission on **LEPROSY SUNDAY**, to be celebrated on 28th January, 1979. Leprosy Sunday material will be available from The Leprosy Mission, Massey Hall, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110 001. Donations will be gratefully received at the same address (Cheques, drafts to be made payable to the Leprosy Mission Trust, India)'

Confessing—by Organising

I was brought up in a poor family. There are ten of us. My father was a street hawker. My mother helped him look after the stall. The money we made one day, we spent on the same day. When my number 6 sister reached school age, we could not send her to school because we did not have \$ 30 each month for her school fees. I was the eldest daughter. I was then fourteen and had just completed primary school. So I went to work in a factory to earn an income.

When I was in school, and it was a church school, I went to Sunday School. After I began to work, I tried to go for Sunday service, but I could not go to the youth fellowship or summer camps. I was very envious of others in middle school. So I went to evening class, hoping I could become as learned as my old classmates.

My mother was always tired. One day she became sick. So I stopped going to evening class. I stayed at home to look after my younger brothers and sisters. Soon, I went to church less and less. My friends in the church were very concerned about my studies. They were not concerned about my work. They wanted me not to be a factory worker. I could not meet their hope. Later, I was baptized, I attended Sunday worship. I liked singing, but I dared not join the choir, because they always sang English hymns. And there were many words I did not understand.

So I have worked for ten years now. I have worked in many industries—plastics, electronics and garments. Some time ago, I worked in a garment factory. It was owned by three persons. They made a lot of money. They wanted to split up and to start their own factories. So the owners wanted to close down the factory they together owned. But they did not tell the workers. They did not want to pay compensation. So for one month before the closing down they only gave us three or four days' work in a week.

In the garment industry in Hong Kong, workers are paid by piece. If there is no work, there is no income. If there is not sufficient work, workers would have to go to another factory to seek more work. In this way, employers do not have to give any severance payment. Our factory had three hundred workers. But now, only one hundred remained. I learned about the closing down from a foreman. So I got together a few workers and asked the employer for compensation. It was not easy. Some workers had worked for three years in the factory. They were entitled by law to severance pay. So they did not bother to unite with us. They did not think about others. Some workers had been only a few months in the factory. They thought, 'Well, the most compensation we could get is only one hundred dollars or so, why waste time. It's better to move to another factory, make good money and save our breath'. I had only been ten months in the factory. The amount of money I could get was not much. But I and a few others thought we should fight for our pride.

So we organized the remaining workers, and asked for fair compensation. We demanded that (1) all workers should get one month's pay in lieu of notice, and (2) that those with three months or more get

7 days' wages as severance pay, those with six months or more get 10 days' wages, and those with eighteen months get 15 days'.

So we negotiated with the owners. A lady owner said, 'You garment girls can easily find another job. Today you leave my factory. Tomorrow you walk into another factory. Your demands are ridiculous'. We became angry. 'We have worked here many months, and have made a lot of money for you. Now you want to close down this factory when you have made a lot of money. We should be compensated.' We pressed our demands.

One week later, the employer agreed to give us severance pay. But no pay in lieu of notice. We pressed again and again. Finally, we also got seven days' wages in lieu of notice. It took me and other workers fifteen days to get this much. During this period, we only worked five days. The struggle cost us dearly. But it changed me. Before, I had thought that to be a Christian means to serve in church, to do good private devotion, to be an obedient worker in the factory, to deliver the goods on time and to be kind to fellow-workers. Now, I know I am one of the workers. Their needs are my needs.

I have now a group of Christian factory workers who feel the same way. Last month, one of us was injured at work. A big box fell on her back. She was in great pain. She rested at home for a few days. When she returned for her pay-cheque, she found there was no sickness pay. Even the pay for a statutory holiday was deducted from her wage. She protested, and the reply was 'This is our regulation'. We complained to the Labour Department. They said the factory did not report the industrial accident. They had no record to work on.

This is a German-owned factory: Triumph International. It produces ladies' bra, underwear, selling world-wide. Triumph has factories in the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan and Australia. In Hong Kong, it occupies four floors with nine production lines, each with more than fifty sewing machines. It employs over 600 workers.

In this factory, stairways, toilets and elevators are all divided up. One for management and one for the workers. We are paid by the minute. Now, it is six cents per minute. There are five hundred and twenty minutes. If we make more than six cents per minute, we earn less. There is no sickness benefit as provided by law. Paid holidays are often denied on the ground of workers having been sick before.

Back to the worker who was injured at Triumph International. She was in hospital for two weeks. After that she rested at home. During the whole period, she had no income. She had to pay expensive medical bills. She used up all her savings. Some workers have begun solidarity organizing at the plant. This sister said, 'God doesn't like injustice'.

FUNG LAI FONG

Courtesy: 'TESTIMONY amid Asian Suffering' (C.C.A.).

BIBLE SUNDAY

An Appeal from the Bible Society of India

Tragedy struck us twice in the last 12 months. Millions of people in Andhra, Tamil Nadu and many North Indian States were rendered homeless overnight, as cyclone and floods hit them. When other relief agencies rushed in with food and clothing, the Bible Society went in, and is continuing its ministry, to replace the Bible that had been washed away in the floods. The survivors did face a great spiritual crisis. Their anguished hearts raised the questions: 'Why should this happen to us?' 'Is there a God?' Through specially selected passages, the Bible Society tried to help by bringing messages of courage and hope. 'God is with us even though—'

Opportunity of a different kind opened up during the year, when the new translation meant for children and adult new-literates were released in 18 different languages. As our traditional translations were usually above the level that children and new literates could understand, special translations were brought out using simple words and short sentences. The response was most enthusiastic. The books are in a graded series, one to five, and a person who has completed reading Book V will be in a position to go on to the New Testament. Schools and Churches have found here a programme for nurture of Christian children, and it also gave them an effective evangelistic tool for reaching non-Christians. The Government of India has undertaken a massive drive for removal of illiteracy. The U. N. O. has also asked for special attention to be given to children and to observe 1979 as the International Year of the Child. The Bible Society of India should be helped to play a meaningful role in both these programmes.

Today those of us who have been mercifully spared have a special responsibility laid on us. The opportunity to bring timely nurture to a new generation is also challenging us to new tasks. On Bible Sunday, let us

- thank God for that priceless Book
- renew our dedication to serve the Bible cause in this land
- pray that God may bless our humble efforts to bring to millions that joy and peace the Christ alone can give.

Yours in the Service of God's Kingdom,

A. E. INBANATHAN
General Secretary
Bible Society of India

✠ ALEXANDER MAR THOMA METROPOLITAN
President
Bible Society of India

Joint Council of Church of North India, Church of South India And Mar Thoma Church

Prayer for Unity of Churches

Almighty God, our heavenly father, in you alone all things are held together in unity. You have united us in a new way in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. We praise you for your love which is the bond of our unity.

We give thanks to you that you have led the three churches to Which We severally belong to come together and to form a Joint Council. You have also called us to unite in prayer that we may all receive your blessings and grow in unity.

In our prayers, O Father, we join with our Lord Jesus Christ in his prayer for all who believe in him 'That they all may be one.....that the world may believe' (John 17: 20).

We confess before you our tolerance of disunity and our share in taking pride in our several heritages more than in Jesus Christ and his Cross.

We pray for the continued guidance of your Holy Spirit that through the Joint Council our bond of unity in love may deepen and our oneness may strengthen our witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Help us to unite for Christ's mission not only at the national level but in all levels, wherever we can be together for worship, mission and service. We seek your blessings so that our common life and witness may be a blessing to the nation to which we belong.

We specially pray for Eric S. Nasir, the Moderator of the Church of North India, N. D. Ananda Rao Samuel, the Moderator of the Church of South India and Alexander Mar Thoma, the Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Church, and all other Bishops, ministers and the laity and commend them to your mercy, protection and guidance. Grant that led by their ministry the churches may continually grow in love and unity.

May your peace, our heavenly Father, be always with us.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Meaning of Christmas for our World today

Millions and millions of babies are born year after year. At Christmas we think of a particular baby born in the cow-shed of a village choultry at a hamlet in Judah. A tiny lantern was perhaps all the light at the manger. What does the birth of Jesus mean to us?

First of all: The God of history has become part of human history. History has special significance because it is related to His story. Christmas divides the human history into B.C. and A.D.; Christ Himself becomes 'the middle point', to use Cullman's phrase, of the history of salvation; He has become the point of reference to God and man. One has to turn to Jesus Christ to know who God is and what man ought to be. He is the author and finisher of our faith.

Secondly: The Lord of all being identified Himself with a poor child, the very embodiment of want, suffering and helplessness. At Christmas God emptied Himself or deglorified Himself. He identifies himself with the homeless.....there was no room at the inn at Bethlehem.....; with the labourers.....He was born in a carpenter's family.....; with the stateless.....He was taken to Egypt as a refugee.....; and with the persecuted and the oppressed. Christmas is the expression of God's love for these men.

Thirdly: God has spoken to us by His Son in a marvellous manner; He has communicated Himself to mankind (Hebrews 1:2). The *Vedanta* could only express *Brahman* in abstract and inconclusive terms, *neti, neti* (not that, not that). The *Nirguna Brahman* who has neither relation nor quality is an abstraction alien to all that is flesh. In Chinese thought the Word is nothing but eternal silence. Was not this silence broken when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14)? Is it not for this reason that Paul claims Christ to be our true Wisdom (I Corinthians, 1:24, 30)?

Finally: Christ who is born is our Saviour. The synoptic gospels refer to Christ as Saviour only once, when they describe the first Christmas. Mankind celebrates warriors and benign rulers as Saviours. Christ is our true Saviour because He saves us from all ills, including social ills, those ulcers of the disease called Sin. Could we hail the Great Saviour and sing: *O Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord?*

Rev. J. T. K. DANIEL

Dear Sir,

Having returned to my native heath after an absence of six years the magnitude of the educational enterprise of the Church of South India has been a sort of rediscovery of what I ought to have known. But perhaps one should also enter a caveat against the CSI for the existence of a communication gap regarding its educational outreach!

The Statistical Data is as Follows

- (a) 28 Colleges with a total enrolment of 26,000 students.
- (b) 191 Secondary Schools with a total enrolment of 1,64,000 students.
- (c) 1885 Nursery, Elementary and Middle Schools with a total enrolment of 3,9,336 students.
- (d) 13 Teacher Training Institutions and 32 Industrial Institutes etc. with a total enrolment of 23,557 students.

While these figures reveal the quantitative size of the undertaking we do not have a clear picture of the present quality of all these educational institutions. The general impression one gets is that there is a great need of qualitative improvement. Concern has also been expressed regarding the steady erosion of the Christian Character of many of these institutions.

What can be done to meet the situation? It is gratifying that the Synod is seriously concerned and that there is a proposal to set up a Research and Study Department which is under active consideration.

While this is a move in the right direction I wonder whether such a Department by itself can tackle the multifarious problems involved from defending our constitutional and legal right to maintain educational institutions to the improvement of the poverty-stricken village schools?

Therefore, I would like to suggest that the time is ripe for the setting up of a CSI Educational Trust. It could exclude those institutions which are already legal and registered entities and bring all other institutions within its purview. Such a Trust would ease the Church's administrative burden, take responsibility for the qualitative improvement of institutions and undertake the necessary fund raising. It would also give the Church greater flexibility in dealing with the Governmental authorities as a legally recognized body. In all these matters we could profit from the experience of the educational trusts maintained by other religious minorities and also co-operate with them in all areas of common concern.

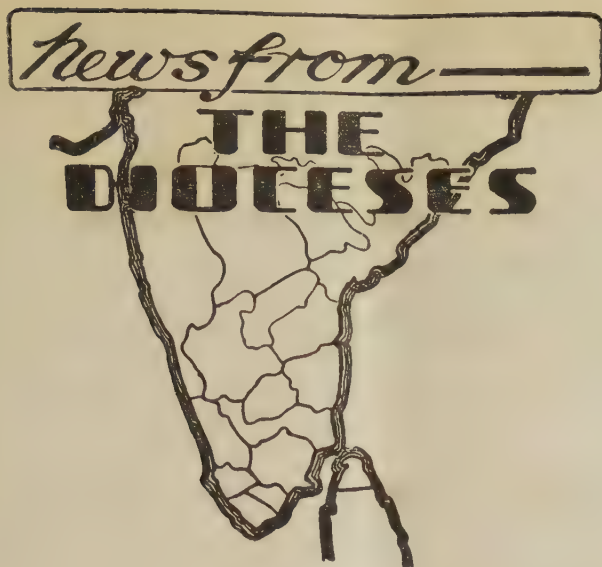
Since I am not familiar with all the structural complexities of the CSI my suggestion may be quite naïve and unrealistic though I feel it is not lacking in logic and historical necessity! I wonder what your readers, especially those educationists who are actually involved, think of the practicability of the idea?

Yours etc.

CHANDRAN D. S. DEVANESEN

Director,

Institute for Development Education.



KARNATAKA CENTRAL DIOCESE

The outstanding event of the month was of course the Special meeting of the Diocesan Council. We had to spend a long time on the question of membership of a mid-term Council. This was eventually sorted out, and so this problem which had been creating a great deal of anxiety is now behind us. Time did not permit taking up the proposed constitutional amendments for the representation of women and youth on Committees. The Council approved setting up of a Committee to prepare a feasibility report on the proposal to start an Arts & Science College and this report will be submitted to the next Council. The Committee was also asked to consider the suggestions made for job orientated training. A lively debate was held on the question of ordination of women to the Presbyterate. This was laid on the table in order that more discussion may go on at the local level. A public meeting was held to hear the three Presidents of the Joint Council of C.S.I., C.N.I., Mar Thoma Churches. A morning was spent discussing Spiritual Renewal. Papers are being sent for further discussion at Pastorate level. The nature of the issues before the Special meeting made it a very tense session, but we were able to arrive at a consensus on all the major issues.

THE RT. REV. K. E. GILL

BOOK REVIEW

LOVE SO AMAZING by D. G. S. Dhinakaran
(Translated by D. S. George Muller and G. I. Sathiaraj)

The captivating title of the book induces the mind to spontaneously echo the marvellous hymn 'When I survey the Wondrous Cross'. The book is a sincere attempt of the writer to survey the spiritual, power-giving, propitiatory virtues of the incidents relating to the Cross of our Lord. Tools of literary criticism, we should admit, are not applicable to inspired evangelical writing, such as this book, because (1) it is the word of God with power, (2) it is both time-bound and timeless, (3) it is universal as well as personal, (4) it is addressed ultimately to the heart of man, not merely to his mind, (5) it is inspired by the Holy Spirit, (6) it is expressed in a tone of divine authority and with a sense of profound personal commitment, (7) it is profusely illustrative and parabolical, meant to edify rather than entertain, and (8) it is not restrained by any rules of composition which might pertain to any literary form. The spiritual value of the book depends on how strictly every part of the book adheres to the eight-fold characteristics of inspired writing mentioned above.

The chapters 'Bloody Sweat' and 'Blood' constitute a straight answer and challenge to the sophisticated modernist-theologian who ridicules any reference to the blood of Jesus Christ as 'bloody theology'. The writer carefully and unapologetically quotes the prophets and gives life illustrations of transformed lives to bear out the eternal plan of God in the salvation of sinful human beings. A dialogue (page 39), or an apt quote from a famous hymn (page 37), or a thrilling analogy from history (page 55), or a familiar domestic scene of woe (page 49), or an occasional call to heart-searching and repentance (page 56) here and there heightens the emotional potential and deepens the spiritual relevance of the message of the book to contemporary life.

The translators have done their best, but a few obvious errors, as given below, could have been avoided :

1. Jesus was derived from God (page 4). (He coexisted with the Father)
2. Divinity filled Him (page 5). (He was Divine essentially)
3. As long as He was in Heaven. He could not know the sorrows of man (Page 6). (Why not?)
4. A man's life is composed of soul, mind and body (page 8). ('There is a spirit in man')
5. Didn't He tear open the Virgin's womb to be born? (page 33). (—rather melodramatic)

Also the ironic apostrophe to Pilate on page 30 is absolutely out of place and theologically unsound in the solemn context in which it occurs.

The constant interconnection established throughout the book between the love and judgement of God, Blood and Fire, Holy Spirit and purity of life, Church and mission, repentance and vision, and humility and power breathes into the work a unity of love and soul-burden.

J. W. E. DHARMARAJ

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Matter :

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DR. GNANA ROBINSON,
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[DECEMBER 1978]

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DECEMBER 1978]

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THE UNITED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

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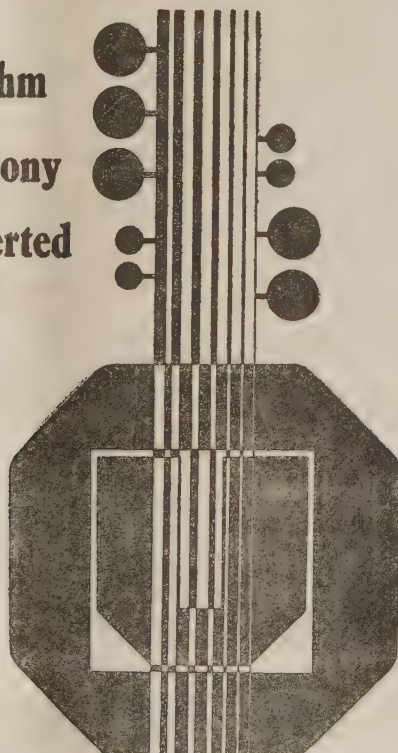
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